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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

**Juan Vargas**  
51st District, California

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MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA,  
AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

March 24, 2020

Michael R. Pompeo  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20520

Andrew R. Wheeler  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Room 3426 WJC North  
Washington, DC 20460

Jayne Harkins  
Commissioner  
International Boundary and Water  
Commission, U.S. Section  
4191 North Mesa St.  
El Paso, TX 79902

Dear Secretary Pompeo, Administrator Wheeler, and Commissioner Harkins

I am writing to address and request information on the worsening situation in the Tijuana River Valley, located along the California-Mexico border in the 51<sup>st</sup> Congressional District. I have been told that at the end of 2019 there were heavy rainstorms that left several pumps in Tijuana, Mexico inoperable. In a recent letter, the Port of San Diego and the City of Imperial Beach informed my office about these inoperable pumps. Therefore, I am asking for a status update on the current situation in the Tijuana River Valley. I am also requesting that the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the U.S. State Department (DOS) respond to the concerns of the Port of San Diego and the City of Imperial Beach.

The Port of San Diego and the City of Imperial Beach shared that, when operable, these pumps in the Tijuana River, act as the first line of defense in preventing the flow of wastewater into the United States. They have stated that the inoperable pumps are responsible for an estimated 3.5 billion gallons of polluted flows into the United States since November 28, 2019. This makes

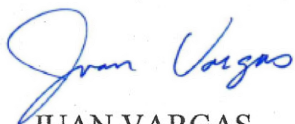
this situation far more dire than the sewage spills in February 2017 when 256 million gallons of wastewater flowed into the United States and then the Pacific Ocean.

This severe situation negatively affects the lives and livelihood of people living in and around the Tijuana River Valley. At the same time, the Port of San Diego and City of Imperial Beach reported to my office that DOS, the EPA, IBWC, and Mexico are not providing sufficient information to the public about when these inoperable pumps will be repaired or replaced. Therefore, I write today on behalf of stakeholders in my district, to request an update on the following topics:

1. The status of communication between DOS and Mexican officials on this issue.
2. The status of repairing the pump stations.
3. The volume of sewage released to the Tijuana River since the loss of any pump stations.
4. The flow source identification and contribution (i.e. wastewater, stormwater, etc., and at what ratio).

The inoperable pumps have resulted in an overwhelming amount of toxic sewage in the region. This is a dire situation and I would appreciate your attention to my request for an update on the status of the pumps affecting the Tijuana River Valley and my request for a response to the concerns of the Port of San Diego and the City of Imperial Beach. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Paola Guzman, of my staff, at (202) 225-8045 or by email at [paola.guzman@mail.house.gov](mailto:paola.guzman@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



JUAN VARGAS  
Member of Congress